

# Mortuaries' casket prices competitive

Richard Myers, past president of the National Funeral Directors Association and the Utah Funeral Directors Association, indicates in a public statement that many of the claims of the new casket outlet store are inaccurate and grossly exaggerated. Referring to recent articles in the Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News, Myers says a number of statements by David Cook were inaccurate.

By Richard Myers

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David Cook indicated that a 1994 ruling by the Federal Trade Commission has given birth to stores such as the Casket Outlet. The FTC Funeral Service Trade Rule was put into effect on Sept. 24, 1982.

## My view

This would make Mr. Cook's date incorrect by 12 years. When the FTC trade rule came into effect, the National Funeral Association published, schooled and trained funeral directors throughout America on compliance with the rule. In fact, a whole section of our current 1997 Directory of Members has the FTC rule in its entirety with counsel on compliance. Any responsible person can call any mor-

tuary in Utah and receive not only a complete price list of caskets and vaults but an itemized breakdown of professional service and facility charges. The Casket Outlet sells caskets only.

The allegation that Mr. Cook makes of "huge corporate takeovers of many funeral homes throughout the country" is not true in Utah. Only two mortuaries in Utah are owned by national conglomerates. Several mortuaries in Utah have been in operation for over 100 years, dating back to Utah's territorial days. Many of the state's mortuaries have been in operation for over 50 years. Such a proud history of service and longevity is hardly characteristic of firms that are less than honest. Many mortuaries are among the oldest continuously operating firms in their community.

Mr. Cook's intimation that only he can save money on caskets because he "purchases directly from the factory" is erroneous. Over 40 percent of the caskets purchased in Utah are direct from the manufacturer. Over 95 percent of the caskets our four mortuaries purchase are di-

rect from the manufacturer. Many of our Utah mortuaries purchase from these same manufacturers.

The concept of "casket stores" is not new. There have been a number of these all across America, most of which were in operation for only a short duration. Utah, in fact, has had two entities that previously have sold caskets directly to the public, neither of which is still in business.

Recent statistics of the National Funeral Directors Association indicate that the intermountain area mortuaries have the lowest cost of funeral service anywhere in America. The Utah mortuaries have been traditionally recognized as providing the finest of professional service.

I suggest that the people of this area interested in making funeral arrangements look around, for each funeral home in your community contains a complete selection of caskets. I think the public will be pleasantly surprised at how competitive mortuary casket costs are. There is also the distinct advantage of having everything taken care of at one place at the same time.

tion and others raised health concerns.

She sought support from an Internet news group for dieters, posting a note asking, "Can I do it without Redux?"

She wasn't the only one. Dieters desperate to shed pounds, who marveled at the willpower they gained while on Redux and fenfluramine, are now scrambling for alternatives.

Some eyeball herbal remedies. Others contemplate alternative diet drug combinations including "phen-pro," which substitutes the anti-depressant Prozac for fenfluramine.

Many are furious over the negative attention showered on Redux and fenfluramine, even though researchers note they were pulled because of potentially life-threatening side effects.

Comparatively little fuss, these dieters argue, is being made over how the drugs finally brought success to thousands of dieters who failed to lose weight through more traditional methods.

"They're mad, plain mad, fighting mad," said Dr. Denise Bruner, president-elect of the American Society of Bariatric Physicians.

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